

TESTIMONY OF RHONDA BOISVERT
VICE PRESIDENT, CT ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES
IN OPPOSITION TO
HB 6367- AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Rhonda Boisvert. I am the owner of Pleasant View Manor in Watertown, Ct. and vice president of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes. I am here today to testify in strong opposition to Section 9 of House Bill No. 6367, which caps the rates of Residential Care Homes.

The rates for most Ct. Residential Care Homes have been capped for the last four years. A few homes have had a slight increase, however they are in danger of going back to their previous rates.

Residential Care Homes provide an incredible financial value to the State of Connecticut. An average daily rate is between \$82.00 and \$88.00 per day. Some homes get more and some get less. With that amount of money, residents have all of their daily needs met. This includes meals, snacks, recreation, transportation to medical appointments and laundry services. Our facilities are clean and we work hard to follow the numerous applicable state regulations. This is all while working with the most vulnerable populations in the state, the mentally disabled and the elderly.

New regulations that have recently been imposed on our homes have only increased our costs in liability insurance. Despite this homes have reduced costs to the state. Homes have saved the State several hundred thousand dollars by taking over the drug administration for our residents from the visiting nurses who were costing the State hundreds of thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, our rates remained capped and costs continue to rise.

Perhaps the most important information that I want to convey, is about the population that residential care homes serve. We no longer have the 80 or 90 year old residents who were happy to watch television and play bingo once in a while. Our population now consists of any age over 21. In my home, every resident has a psychiatric diagnosis. My employees work on a 1 to 18 ratio. If a resident acts out, the employee must do some quick thinking. The population that we serve is the very population that the media is talking about. We are the homes that take care of those people. Our employees are not compensated in pay or insurance benefits as state employees who work with the same population.

Many Residential Care Home Operators, including myself, are finding it more and more difficult to manage our homes with no new revenue and our expenses continuing to rise by the day. I haven't taken a paycheck for myself since the end of October 2012.

As a result, we strongly object to the rate cap being proposed in Section 9 of the bill. The rate cap for the past four years has already caused much hardship to home operators and our residents. Further rate caps will certainly result in an extreme hardship to the industry and closures of more homes. This will be sad and will be a great loss to the state, who will have to rehouse the residents at alternative accommodations, albeit, at a much higher cost. I, therefore, urge you to please remove the language capping residential care home rates.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Boisvert

Owner of Pleasant View Manor

Vice President, Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes